



## KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### MEDIA ADVISORY

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### **COMMISSIONER PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR AUTISM AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING**

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt is urging those in the education community to recognize World Autism Awareness Day, Saturday, April 2 in support of children and families who experience autism on a daily basis.

The United Nations adopted World Autism Awareness Day in 2007 to raise awareness of the disorder. Autism is characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors. Autism may be associated with intellectual disability, difficulties in motor coordination and attention, and physical health issues such as sleep and gastrointestinal disturbances. However, some people with autism excel in visual skills, music, math and art, among others.

“Equity, achievement and integrity form the basis of our work with Kentucky’s children,” Pruitt said. “All students including those with autism deserve an excellent education. I’m proud to celebrate the gifts of these students and lend my support to the awareness of autism in Kentucky.”

World Autism Awareness Day, April 2, kicks off Autism Awareness Month in April.

“Our standard should be inclusion and compassion for all, and recognizing the struggle these students and their families face is one small way the education community can show its support.”

The Kentucky Autism Training Center (KATC) at the University of Louisville promotes autism awareness year round and is committed to improving the quality of life for those affected by autism. Its mission is to strengthen Kentucky’s systems of support for people affected by autism by bridging research to practice and by providing training and resources to families and professionals.

“As the father of a child with autism, my heart stands with all who have been touched by this disorder,” said Secretary of the Governor’s Cabinet, Scott Brinkman. “I applaud the efforts of those individuals throughout the world who are working tirelessly to address this global health priority.”

(more)

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“Anytime we can help families facing the challenges of autism, we should,” said Rep. Sannie Overly, Majority Caucus Chair. “Having access to early and quality care is critical to giving kids on the autism spectrum the best chance possible to be successful in life. For that reason, I was proud to propose legislation this session to help families navigate insurance coverage for their loved ones with autism.”

For more information on autism, or for ideas on promoting autism awareness, contact the Kentucky Autism Training Center at <https://louisville.edu/education/kyautismtraining>.

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